ABSOLUT VODKA MEDIA PLAN 2019

by

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Honors Project

Appalachian State University

Submitted to the Department of Communications
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts

May, 2018

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ABSOLUT VODKA 2019 Media Plan
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This campaign will focus on taking Absolut Vodka to the next level. We are going to emphasize the all-natural and highly sustainable elements of Absolut Vodka production in order to draw in and capture the attention of our target audience.

PRIMARY RESEARCH: A survey was conducted with 149 respondents and was distributed via social media.

POSITIONING: Increase perceived value of Absolut Vodka in the minds of the consumer and highlight it as a premium brand

CREATIVE: “ABSOLUT YOU” The campaign will encourage people to associate Absolut Vodka in a personal way, revealing their experiences and emphasizing an emotional connection.

CAMPAIGN PERIOD: January 1, 2019-December 31, 2018

BUDGET: 20 Million

TARGET AUDIENCE: Millennial generation, people ages 25-34 who reside in the U.S

TARGET AREA: Nationwide campaign, extra emphasis placed on the south region given that it has the lowest index numbers in terms of areas consuming Absolut vodka in the United States.

MEDIA MIX: Mix of traditional, nontraditional, digital, and mobile media

ULTIMATE OBJECTIVES:

1) Increase revenue by 10% and awareness by 5% in target areas

2) Encourage people to talk about and associate themselves with Absolut vodka.
BRAND HISTORY

Absolut Vodka was established by Lars Olsen Smith who wanted to create a vodka unique to Sweden. He developed a system that would remove impurities from the vodka without compromising the raw ingredients. The original name for his alcohol was Absolut Renat Brännvin, meaning “absolutely purified spirits”. Absolut Vodka has continued this process since 1879. L.O. Smith’s main values for his company included advocating moderation, making a superior product, caring for employees and co-workers, and creating a better world. In 1979, Absolut Vodka was launched internationally and in 2008, was purchased by Pernod Ricard for 8.3 billion dollars. Although Pernod Ricard is a French Company, The Absolut Company continues to make Absolut Vodka fresh from Sweden just like L.O. Smith used to make it.
INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

In 2016, vodka sales volume in the U.S. amounted to about 69.8 million 9-liter cases and over 25 billion in retail sales. The volume of vodka imported by the United States in that same year came to 42.84 million of proof gallons. Smirnoff is the leading vodka brand in the United States, accounting for a 13 percent share in 2016, Absolut falls right behind. Industry statistics from the Distilled Spirits Council show vodka sales continuing to trend upward as 1,560 more cases of vodka were sold in 2017 as compared to the previous year. Vodka sales account for 32% of spirits volume and flavored vodka accounts for 21% of all vodka sold.
For primary research, a survey was made and distributed. Of the 149 respondents who took the survey, 71% were women between the ages of 21-34. In total, 91% of respondents had heard of Absolut Vodka and over half of them had tried it, however most people did not notice or remember any remarkable qualities about it. My findings also showed that people do enjoy and drink flavored vodka, but no one specified Absolut when they listed brands they liked. The number one most answered brand for flavored vodka was Smirnoff.
SECONDARY RESEARCH

Alcohol research done in 2016 by Sudhinaraset, Wigglesworth, and Takeuchi explains the different social and cultural contexts of alcohol use. The effects of advertising on alcohol use and brand consumption differs depending on age, gender, race, and other qualities. Flavored alcohol tends to attract women more and so it is usually marketed to them with creative designs and bottles. African Americans account for 67% of all malt liquor sales. According to the Distilled Spirits Council, when it comes to the spirits and liquor industry, vodka has the highest level of sales and is the most popular type of spirit, making up 32% of all spirits sales. One study conducted, “The Female Alcoholic”, attempted to discover whether or not there was a difference in male and female alcoholics. The study look at what they drank, how much, how often, and what effects their alcoholism had. The results are below:

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Within this campaign it is important to note that we will be highlighting Absolut as a premium brand and therefore will want it to be considered with brands such as Grey Goose and Tito’s.
CHRIS BAKER (32)

Chris, along with his wife Amy, live in Tallahassee, FL. He is very invested in sustainability and loves to support companies that are striving to make a difference in that way. Chris and Amy settle down at night to watch Black Mirror while having a drink. He usually drinks beer because it is cheaper and more available, but he is beginning to enjoy simple mixed drinks more often. He generally follows his friends’ suggestions or a celebrity endorsement on new things to try. An Absolut White Russian is an easy drink that Chris could settle down with at night.

JOSH STORY (27)

Josh is a single executive living in Los Angeles, CA. Josh usually drinks only on the weekends and is very selective on his alcohol. He drinks vodka because that is what he drank in college but is looking to move onto a more high-quality brand than he used to drink. He does not often go to bars and prefers having people over or drinking in more casual settings such as house parties. One of his favorite events to attend is Coachella and he makes it a priority to go every year with his friends from college. A great drink for Josh is an Absolut Mule using Absolut lime, Ginger beer, and lime juice.
KAYLEE SMITH (25)

Kaylee is a young professional living in New York City. Her job is very stressful and on the weekends Kaylee likes to go out to different bars around town with her friends. She is open to trying new things and usually makes her drink decisions based on the special of the night. She is not too picky about the brands of liquor used and normally cannot tell the difference between them. Kaylee cares more about the experience than the actual drink. Kaylee also loves to have girl’s nights in and is always looking for new recipes for fun cocktails to make. An Absolut Raspberri cocktail made with sparkling wine would add a pop to her next girl’s night in.

KATIE CAMARO (36)

Katie is a stay at home mom with three kids living in Raleigh, NC. After having her third child, Katie is trying very hard to lose the baby weight. She has cut out all sugary drinks from her diet, which has been hard because she prefers flavored vodka which is loaded with sugar. Katie currently enjoys winding down after a long day with a refreshing, spiked, sparkling water. She would like a variety of alcoholic beverages available in the grocery store to streamline her shopping with three children. The hypothetical drink “Absolut Seltzer” would be a perfect fit for Katie.
SITUATION ANALYSIS

Absolut Vodka along with parent company, Pernod Ricard, have both internal and external core competencies that provide a firm basis for the company. Internally, Absolut has a secure product portfolio which they are continuing to grow due to their strong research and development structure. Absolut has a large distribution network within the United States. Financially, the company is doing very well and according to Statista they are ranked second in terms of vodkas among respondents over the age of twenty-one who drink vodka at least once a month. The emphasis Absolut places on sustainability can have a positive effect on both the consumer and the distributor. Externally, as long as Absolut continues to advertise for its consumers to drink responsibly, advertising restrictions should not be an issue. Because Absolut is beginning to be viewed as a premium vodka, their competition is high.
SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

· Universal brand equity- Worldwide distribution, high consumer/brand recognition in United States.
· One Source Production- Guaranteed quality, all production comes from single distribution center in Sweden
· Parent company, Pernod Ricard, is well known and funded

WEAKNESSES

· Cost- Due to single production center, costs to transport vodka around the world are high and potential for issues if problems occur at the production center
· Competitive Market
· Increasing cost of fuel- Distribution depends completely on transportation, which is getting more expensive as fuel cost rise

OPPORTUNITIES

· Hypothetically, Absolut could expand their product portfolio to include ready to drink items such as Absolut Seltzer
· The use of social media (especially Facebook) to reach clients
· Use advertising to have brand association with premium products

THREATS

· Government actions and advertising restrictions against alcohol
· Excessive drinking can have a negative impact on health
· Perceptions of alcohol brands can sometimes be negative
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:
The primary goal of this advertising campaign is to increase overall revenue for Absolut Vodka. However, we found that it is equally important to increase brand awareness and market share. Ideally, in the year 2019, this campaign will increase awareness by 5% in our targeted areas. We will accomplish this by using different mediums such as traditional, online, outdoor, social media and sponsorships. The target market includes millennials which fall between the ages of 24-38, and there is a large percentage of that target audience who knows about Absolut but does not purchase it. The secondary goal is to increase the index number of the southern region to above 100, currently it is set at 72. Ultimately, the aim is to get consumers interacting with the brand on social media through mediums such as geofilters on Snapchat, Facebook and Instagram ads. We believe that Absolut Vodka has the potential to generate a large amount of interest from this advertising campaign. The campaign will have a large reach and create a significant impact which will inevitably drive revenue up.
MEDIA MIX

TRADITIONAL
- Print Magazines
- Television Commercials
- Product Placement

ONLINE
- Streaming Websites
  - Hulu
  - Spotify
- SEO
- Content Marketing
  - Tastemade
  - Tipsy Bartender

PUBLIC RELATIONS
- Newsjacking
- Contingency Fund
- Sponsorships
  - Coachella
  - New Year’s Eve
  - Absolut Nights

OUTDOOR
- Billboards
- Interactive Media
  - Times Square Live Ad
EXECUTION SUMMARY

Due to the large age range and variety of lifestyles, we will be utilizing different mediums and time frames to optimize reach to the audience. This campaign will center around the slogan “Absolut You”. The campaign will encourage people to associate themselves and their experiences with Absolut Vodka. Each of the following executions are examples of how we can create ways for people to associate Absolut Vodka with their own experiences. We are focusing primarily on non-traditional media because that is the most effective type of advertising for our target audience of millennials.
EXECUTIONS

SNAPCHAT

Our plan is to use Snapchat in a few different ways for this campaign. First, we will have geofilters for our Absolut Nights sponsorships. These filters will only be present in the area surrounding the bar and only for that one night. They will have bottles of Absolut as a border with the saying “Absolut Night at ______” and the date. We will also be utilizing a nationwide filter during the month of November to support our “Absolut Hero” mini campaign. This filter is going to have an outline of our bottle and when a picture is taken, the person will appear inside the bottle. The bottom of the filter will have the statement “______’s Absolut Hero”. Finally, we will be running ads in the discover section of the app.

ABSOLUT NIGHTS

On Saturday nights during the months of August, September, and October, we will sponsor the most popular bars or clubs across the country, in the following cities: New York City, NY, Los Angeles, CA, Austin, TX, Washington, DC, Charlotte, NC, Richmond, VA, Atlanta, GA, Miami, FL, Knoxville, TN, Charleston, SC, Fayetteville, AR, Gainesville, FL, and Corpus Christi, TX. We will partner with these locations as we turn the bar/club into an Absolut Pop-Up event. This will feature Absolut décor, cocktails, special social media effects, and drink specials on all Absolut products. These events will help people connect with the brand Absolut Vodka. The promotional material will say “Experience Absolut”. We will be using social media to promote Absolut Nights.
EXECUTIONS

BILLBOARDS

There will be three separate times that billboards will be used. There will be billboards placed nationally but extra ones will be used in our spot market in the south. First, in May, June, and July the billboards will have pictures of fruit and then a bottle of our corresponding flavored vodka and they will say, “For the lovers of Fruit, Drink Absolut”. In September and October we will utilize billboards only in our spot market by having something to do with football season and ways to incorporate Absolut Vodka. In November and December, the billboards will play with the idea that you should make Absolut a part of your holidays.
“A drink should most absolutely compliment your personality and style.”
- Blake

The Best Moscow Mule is the One You Create #AbsolutYou

“There’s nothing like coming home after a long day and settling down with a cold drink. Absolut makes it easy to find recipes with their app and the vodka can’t be beat.”
- Channing

MAGAZINES

Our magazine Ads will feature recipes that are simple to make using either our original or flavored vodkas. We will be running three months of full page color centerfold ads in the following three magazines: Cosmopolitan, Garden and Gun, and People. The ads placed in Cosmopolitan will have a classy look. The ads placed in Garden and Gun will be darker and show that Absolut is a man’s drink. The Ads in People will alternate between these two. We are going to have a celebrity endorsement with each ad that includes their picture and a quote about how Absolut relates to them. The tag line is “make it your own” #AbsolutYou. This is the start to possibly naming a spokesper- son for the company.
EXECUTIONS

TELEVISION ADS

We will be running TV ads locally, only in our spot market. This will save on costs and also help improve the index numbers for these areas.

In April, we plan to run a TV ad which will highlight our new, refreshing drink, Absolut Seltzer. The ad will take place at a busy pool where you will see a group of women in their 30’s hanging out. The camera will pan across the group and they look annoyed because of all the noise and kids running around. Then it will show the last lady who suddenly appears to be on a beach with palm trees and it’s very peaceful. It will then come back to the pool and show all the other ladies looking at her. She will open a cooler filled with Absolut Seltzer and say “try one”. Soon all the ladies are on the beach and a can will float up on a wave. It will say “Absolut Seltzer, a spiked bubbling water you will Absolutely love”

In November we are going to run an ad promoting our Absolut Hero campaign. The idea of this campaign is to highlight the heroes of our world, understanding that anyone can be a hero to someone else. This ad will show short clips of all different types of people who could be a hero. The ad will close with a screen that says, “Not all heros wear a cape... who is your Absolut Hero?” We will also be advertising this campaign on social media.
FACEBOOK/INSTAGRAM

Our Instagram and Facebook ads will appear as promoted and sponsored ads for those in our target age group. Extra emphasis will be placed on people who live in the southern region. Some of these ads will specifically promote our new hypothetical drink, “Absolut Seltzer”. They will be fun and colorful while highlighting the nutritional aspects of the drink. The other main element our social media ads will focus on is our Drinkspiration app and visually appealing drinks with the recipes.

TIMES SQUARE INTERACTIVE

This will be a large interactive screen in the middle of Times Square. The screen will show the outline of our vodka bottle and at the top it will say “Absolut You”. Anyone who is within the camera view will then be projected onto the screen making it appear as though they are inside the bottle.
EXECUTIONS

SPONSORSHIPS

In 2019, we will be sponsoring Coachella as well as the New Year’s Eve show taking place in Times Square. We already sponsor Coachella and this year, Absolut Lime will continue to be the official drink of the concert. We are also planning to promote our current Drinkspiration app. All of our banners and signs will feature a QR code for people to scan and download the app. Sponsoring the New Year’s Eve show in NYC is a great way to build our brand recognition. We will be able to interact with our target audience in person as well as be seen on TV by millions of others who are watching the show. This event will close out the “Absolut You” campaign and the caption for the event will be “Who will YOU be in 2020? #AbsolutYou”.

TASTEMADE

These videos generate as much as 1.5 billion views a month. Therefore, utilizing this platform and having one of our flavored vodkas featured could be successful in raising our brand awareness. There is a wide variety of flavors that the creators could use for these videos and make content that shows the best uses of our brand. We purposefully scheduled these videos in two different seasons. First there will be a summer one which will showcase how to use our Vodka with fresh fruit to create a simple and refreshing drink. Second, we will be using this medium in September and October, specifically in our spot market, to highlight football season and demonstrate making a drink that fits our theme.

HULU

Our advertisements on Hulu will air before and during TV shows. The purpose of these Ads is to showcase the sustainable, pure, and clean product that we offer. No added sugar or preservatives, made from 40% recycled glass, and how we use all parts of the wheat, will be highlighted. The idea of these ads is, “This is the Vodka for you”.
EXECUTIONS

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Absolut Vodka is working hard to stand out with our Corporate Social Responsibility. This is important because according to the American Marketing Association, 70% of millennials are more likely to spend money on a brand that supports causes they believe in. Since millennials represent 2.45 trillion dollars in spending power, Absolut needs to capitalize on this. While we will continue to advertise our commitment to equality, Absolut will also begin to highlight our energy efficient and green practices. All bottles are made from 40% recycled glass and all packaging material is locally sourced. Since 2004, the company’s energy consumption has been reduced by 45% and the carbon emissions by 80% per liter of vodka. This secures Absolut Vodka’s place as the company with the lowest energy consumption per unit among all large distilleries in the world. In addition, Absolut uses as many parts of the wheat as possible. Stillage, a by-product of the distilling process of wheat, is rich in protein and is used to feed 250,000 pigs and 40,000 cows every day. Our research reveals how environmentally aware and efficient Absolut is throughout their distilling and packaging process. Since this fact is highly unknown to the public, we plan to make our consumers aware of the positive impacts our products have on the environment.
This is a national campaign and therefore our primary targets are large cities across the nations. In addition it is important to focus some extra attention on advertising to our secondary target area which is the Southern region of the United States. To do this we will have extra focus cities in our secondary market. The target cities shown on the map were chosen because they have the largest populations, as well as the largest millennial presence.
BUDGET

https://1drv.ms/x/s!Au1RNkGrJvhoIYKfV-GSzVS-t
# MEDIA SCHEDULE

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**Note:** The table represents the media schedule for Absolut Vodka, with specific months marked for each media type.
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REFERENCES

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https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1XFqlUs5cmsQl7Op854y80piSjYU9JhZu2UZADrA0fS8/edit?gid=487693681
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https://www.marketwatch.com/story/pernod-ricard-snaps-up-absolut-vodka-parent-for-83-billion